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Referred: State Affairs and
Finance

1 IN THE HOUSE

BY ANDERSON

2 HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 41

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5 Requesting a comprehensive study of the
6 extension of the state ferry system into
7 Western Alaska.

8 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

9 WHEREAS the cost of delivering freight, whether by air or surface
10 transportation, to Western Alaska communities rapidly is becoming prohibitive;
11 and

12 WHEREAS barge line service to many communities is undependable even
13 during the ice free season and thus does not meet the needs of Alaskans re-
14 siding in isolated rural areas; freight orders frequently languish many months
15 on the docks and in warehouses in Seattle, and only the Bureau of Indian
16 Affairs will guarantee freight delivery when its NORTH STAR III is unable
17 to make a scheduled port-of-call; and

18 WHEREAS the Eighth Alaska Legislature, Second Session, appropriated
19 matching funds for the construction of the first of two ferries to serve
20 communities along the Yukon River with passenger, vehicle and freight trans-
21 portation services; and

22 WHEREAS the 1972 "Report on Scheduling, Routing, Feasibility, and
23 Tariffs: Alaska Marine Highway System" prepared by the firm of Tippetts,
24 Abbett, McCarthy and Stratton, Consulting Engineers, devoted less than half a
25 page to proposals for, and the feasibility of, extension of the Alaska Marine
26 Highway to Western Alaska ports such as Iniskin Bay, South Naknek, Dillingham,
27 Togiak, Bethel, Hooper Bay, Alakanuk and St. Michael, asserting that consider-
28 ation of ferry service be deferred until 1990, if then due to alleged absence
29 of sufficient traffic to warrant its inauguration; and

1 WHEREAS, under the auspices of the Legislative Council, a report on
2 "Transportation in Rural Alaska" was prepared in 1972 suggesting that marine
3 transportation afforded an opportunity for the development of a viable trans-
4 portation delivery system for passengers, vehicles and freight to Western
5 Alaska provided appropriate port facilities and distribution systems,
6 especially to Northwest Alaska, were developed; and

7 WHEREAS, the legislature already subsidizes the delivery of freight to
8 the Aleutian Islands by barge in the amount of a \$35,000 annual appropriation
9 to the Division of Marine Transportation, Department of Public Works, and
10 similar subsidies to other unprofitable routes of waterborne commerce, for
11 example, Icy Straits in Southeastern Alaska (\$25,000); and

12 WHEREAS the Sea-Land Company delivers containerized cargo vans to Kodiak
13 which could be used as a home port for a ferry service extension to the
14 Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands and to all of Western Alaska; and

15 WHEREAS the M/V TUSTUMENA can accommodate containerized vans up to 40
16 feet in length and is, at present, the only United States Coast Guard certi-
17 ficated ocean-going vessel in the state ferry system that could be employed
18 during the ice-free months to provide periodic ferry service to Western Alaska
19 communities with intermediate stops along the Alaska Peninsula and in the
20 Aleutian chain;

21 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Legislature respectfully requests the
22 governor to direct the Department of Public Works, Division of Marine Trans-
23 portation, to undertake a comprehensive study of the extension of the state
24 ferry system into Western Alaska including, but not limited to, consideration
25 of its feasibility, routing, tariffs, vessels, port and terminal facilities,
26 scheduling and both construction and operation costs; and

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department is requested to present its
28 findings and recommendations to the governor and to the legislature not later
29 than 30 days after the Ninth Legislature, Second Session, convenes.